

# SAFE LIFTING



## USE YOUR LEGS; NOT YOUR BACK



### To pick up a load:

- Stand close to the load
- Bend your knees-maintain your back's natural curve
- Grip the load firmly
- Push your body up slowly and smoothly with your legs



### To put it down:

- Don't twist your body
- Bend your knees to lower the load
- Place the load on the edge of a surface, then slide it back



### To use a two person lift:

- Put one person in charge of saying when to lift
- Lift at the same time
- Keep the load level

- Unload at the same time

### Lifting From A Standing Position

#### Recommended



Use of a footrest  
relieves swayback.



Bend the knees and  
hips, not the waist.



Hold heavy objects  
close to you.



Never bend over with-  
out bending the knees.

#### Caution



Not this way.



Not this way.



Not this way.



Not this way.

# BACK/LIFTING SAFETY

## Planning

Proper lifting technique is critical to back safety, but perhaps more important is proper planning. Before you lift that box, or tool, or piece of equipment, take a moment to consider your action: Remember this: Approximately 85% of the population will suffer some form of back pain at some Time in there life.

▼ **Do you need to lift the item manually?**

▼ **How heavy is it?**

▼ **Where are you moving the item from?**

▼ **Where does it have to go?**

▼ **What route do you have to follow?**

Many times the item you are moving could be moved with a piece of equipment - a dolly, a handtruck, a forklift. Consider using mechanical help wherever possible. If the item needs to be moved manually, and it is heavy, or ungainly, ask for help.

When using mechanical help, remember to push, not pull - you'll have more control, and greater leverage. Fasten the load to the equipment, so sudden stops or vibration don't jar it off.

When moving an item from a hard-to-reach place, be sure to position yourself as close to the load as possible. Slide it out to get it closer, and be sure that you have adequate room for your hands and arms. Be aware of adjacent obstructions, on either side or above the load.

Think about where the item will be placed once you've lifted it - will it be overhead?

Under an overhang? In a narrow spot? Try to allow yourself as much room as possible to set the load down. You can always shift it slightly later.

Check your path from place to place - remove tripping hazards, protect openings, set up a well wheel or a bucket and line if you need to get materials up a ladder. Make sure that the lighting is sufficient to see where you are going. Stabilize uneven or loose ground, or choose an alternate route. The shortest way isn't always the fastest, or the safest.

## Balance

As in life in general, moderation and balance are important considerations in care and maintenance of your back. You need the correct proportions of strength, flexibility, and overall quality of life to eliminate or minimize back injuries.

You need to exercise, eat right, and stretch as often as possible to help prevent injuries, and to recover more quickly if injured. In addition, a reduction in stress levels can help to relieve the muscle tension that can contribute to injuries. Remember that most back injuries can be attributed to one of these five causes:

▼ **Posture**

▼ **Body Mechanics/Work Habits**

- ▼ **Stressful Living**
- ▼ **Loss of Flexibility**
- ▼ **Poor Conditioning**

Also consider that not all back injuries are a result of sudden trauma - most are of a cumulative type, where a repeated minor injury has flared up, or continued use of a heavy tool in the same position has caused pain, or a great deal of time is spent in the same position.

Remember that 80% of back injuries occur in people between the ages of 30 and 50 ... with expected life span in America reaching nearly 80 years, that is a long time to live in pain, or with limited mobility.

## **Technique**

- ◆ **Stand Close to the Load**
- ◆ **Grip Firmly**
- ◆ **Bring the Load Close to your Body**
- ◆ **Lift Head and Shoulders First, and With Your Back Straight, Use the Strength of Your Legs to Slowly and Smoothly Push Up**
- ◆ **Make Sure That You Can See Over the Load**
- ◆ **DON'T TWIST YOUR BODY. Torquing Action Can Be Especially Dangerous.**
- ◆ **Move Your Feet First to Change Direction**
- ◆ **Bend Your Knees to Lower the Load**
- ◆ **Keep Your Fingers from Under the Load**
- ◆ **Lower Slowly and Smoothly**
- ◆ **When in Doubt, ASK FOR HELP!**

## **Conclusion**

Care and maintenance of your back is every bit as important as the care and maintenance of your vehicle, your home, or your tools, but this most important asset of our physical being is commonly overlooked or neglected.

Your back is the foundation and the structure upon which the rest of your body relies for balance and support. Used improperly, or unsafely, your back can suffer injuries that can literally change the way you live.

**Care of your back is a lifelong endeavor** that requires commitment, intelligence, and common sense. Remember that back care isn't just about lifting properly, it is also about proper diet, exercise, reducing stress, eliminating hazards where possible. Just as the health of your back can affect your lifestyle, your lifestyle and work habits can effect the health of your back.